



# Branching Out

## Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Spring 2020

Volume 14, Issue 1

### ***SAAM 2020: Socially Distanced Edition***

By Samantha Sustachek



Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) 2020 has come and gone, and as always, the goals for the month for Sexual Assault Services (SAS) were to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate our community on how to prevent it. This year marked the 19th anniversary of SAAM, and the theme for the month, “I Ask,” is meant to empower individuals to put consent into practice. Normalizing and necessitating consent is a clear and concrete example of one of the steps needed to end sexual harassment, abuse, and assault - the ultimate goal of SAAM.

Typically, SAS holds a variety of in-person events in April to recognize SAAM. This year’s COVID-19 health crisis forced SAS staff to get creative in our methods to bring the message of SAAM to the Racine community. Our events for 2020 were online and social distancing friendly. You can find us on Facebook ([SAS of Racine County](#)), Twitter ([SASofRacine](#)), and Instagram ([sasofracinecounty](#)). For each day in April, SAS posted one or more videos, articles, informational links, and resources pertaining to sexual assault awareness and prevention on our various social media platforms. Please share them with your own networks and help us spread the message of the importance of consent.

Since many individuals are staying home and staying safe right now, SAS thought we would offer some fun activities that could be done right in your own living room. During the entire month of April, we held a consent themed coloring contest. Check out our Facebook page to see the winning entry!

Another way to get creative while enjoying some fresh air was by participating in SAS’s Chalk the Walk. We asked the community to grab some chalk and write or draw messages of consent (yes means yes!) on the sidewalk. You can see the results in the [photo album](#) on our Facebook page.

SAS staff also participated in the National Sexual Violence Resource Center’s (NSVRC) #30DaysofSAAM Instagram contest. Check out the photo prompts [here](#), follow SAS’s Instagram ([sasofracinecounty](#)) to see our entries, and join in on the fun yourself. The contest is over for 2020, but we suspect it will be back next year.

We also recognized the 21st annual Denim Day on April 29, 2020. Denim Day began after a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped the person who raped her remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. Each year, SAS staff join advocates and supporters across the country in wearing our jeans to show support for survivors everywhere and

#### **Inside This Issue**

Book Review.....	Page 2
Rompiendo la Barrera.....	Page 3
Family Advocate.....	Page 4
Face to Face & Program Statistics.....	Page 5
Meet Scarlett.....	Page 6

Cont. on page 4



# A Book Review

By Vicki Biehn

## *Know My Name* By Chanel Miller Heartbreaking, Powerful, Moving, and Ultimately Inspiring!

Are you interested in really finding out how sexual assault impacts a survivor's life? If so, I want to encourage you to read Chanel Miller's book, *Know My Name*. This book should be required reading for all, because it so accurately, eloquently, and poignantly describes how sexual assault impacts a survivor and their family's life.

*Know My Name* is a 2019 memoir about a young woman named Chanel who was sexually assaulted by a Stanford University student named Brock Turner. Brock Turner was convicted of three felonies of sexual assault with the intent to rape an unconscious person. He was only sentenced to six months in the county jail and ended up only serving three months in jail. Chanel's victim impact statement was released the day after the sentencing hearing and quickly went viral with millions and millions of individuals reading it. This victim impact statement helped the world learn how sexual assault impacts the survivor and also helped millions of survivors feel heard. Here is a link to that [2016 statement](#).

This memoir begins with Chanel describing the night she went out with her sister and some friends to a party and then woke up at the hospital with a police officer telling her that *"there is reason to believe that you have been sexually assaulted."* From this moment on, much of Chanel's life is not in her control, and she is forced to endure far too many injustices, from the media's portrayal of how the offender's life has been ruined, to the victim-blaming statements, to the inexcusably short sentence from the judge.

Chanel makes it very clear that the justice system is not the friend of a survivor trying to heal from a sexual assault. At one point in the book, Chanel reports that *"[t]he court case was a pot of hot water that quickly dissolved all semblance of a regular life."* *"Nobody had warned me about the waiting, the floating formless months in between, the way it demanded all of you, then none of you."* *"We were fighting for closure, for justice. It was not for me, but at the expense of me, that we'd be able to get there."* *"This is not about the victims' lack of effort. This is about society's failure to have systems in place in which victims feel there's a probable chance of achieving safety, justice, and restoration rather than being retrauma-*

*tized, publicly shamed, psychologically tormented, and verbally mauled. The real question we need to be asking is not, Why didn't she report, the question is, Why would you?"*

The book explains how the media coverage of this case was so painful for Chanel. On the day that the conviction was announced the media reported how the offender had such potential and how his future is ruined. Chanel goes on in the book and reports, *"My pain was never more valuable than his potential."* *"They seemed angry that I'd made myself vulnerable, more than the fact that he'd acted on my vulnerability."*

I appreciate how Chanel describes how this assault did not only impact her, but all those who cared for her – the secondary victims/survivors. At one point in the book, Chanel details how all of her close friends and family felt they had let Chanel down, had not protected her, and how they felt they had hurt her.

One of my favorite parts of the book is when Chanel discusses the two men who came across the assault and then intervened to stop the assault, chased the offender, tackled him down and held him until the police arrived. Chanel explains the need for bystander intervention and a deeper understanding of what it is to be a real man. *"What we needed to raise in others was this instinct. The ability to recognize, in an instant, right from wrong. The clarity of mind to face it rather than ignore it. I learned that before they had chased Brock, they had checked on me. Masculinity is often defined by physicality, but that initial kneeling is as powerful as the leg sweep, the tackling. Masculinity is found in the vulnerability, the crying."*

A powerful part of the book is how Chanel shared that it is okay to be hurt, to fall apart, to not know how one is going to get through this and how she showed that one can heal from this trauma too. The book cover gives meaning and hope to all who have been wounded by sexual trauma. The gold veins on the hardcover of the book are there to represent kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with powdered gold and lacquer. It is a celebration of breaks and scars, instead of an attempt to hide them, and it shows how even broken things can be made whole and beautiful again.

I would like to end this review with Chanel's words on why she wrote this book. *"I wrote this book because the world can be harsh and terrible and often unforgiving. I wrote because there were times I did not feel like living. I wrote because the court system is slow as a snail, and victims are forced to spend so much time fighting, rather than spending their days creating, drawing, cooking...But I would be failing you if you walked away from this book untouched by humanity, without seeing what I saw: those thousands of handwritten letters, ...all the small miracles that sustained me...I wrote, most of all, to tell you I have seen how good the world can be."*

—Vicki



# Rompiendo la Barrera

*Breaking the Barrier*

By Annabell Bustillos

During this time of quarantine, some of us are looking for movies to watch. As the Bilingual Outreach Advocate, I have had the opportunity to work with both the Spanish speaking and the Latinx community. Through working with Latinx families, I have learned of the many fears they face when reporting sexual assault. The fear of deportation can play a big part in the reporting decisions of survivors and their families. Immigration is a common experience for many Latinx families, and no two immigration stories are the same. At this time, any topic surrounding immigration is one that can be politically charged, and for that reason, I would like to state that I have no intention of expressing any views for, or against, any political view on immigration. The purpose of this article is to simply share some films that can be helpful in showing the different experiences that immigrants can face. Individuals who have been through the situations depicted in these movies have experienced trauma. This trauma can also contribute to them not reporting abuse, especially, if they think they might be deported. After going through so much to get to their destination, would they be willing to risk it all by reporting abuse?

Below I picked four films that I feel help immigrants tell their stories from different perspectives.

**Under the Same Moon** PG-13 | 1h 46min | Adventure, Drama

[Trailer](#)

UNDER THE SAME MOON (LA MISMA LUNA) follows a mother (Rosario) in the U.S. whose young son (Carlitos) lives in Mexico with his grandmother. It tells the parallel stories of nine-year-old Carlitos and his mother, Rosario. Rosario works hard in the U.S. to save money and bring her son to the U.S. to be with her and have a better life. Unfortunately, a family tragedy happens, and this accelerates Carlitos's departure from Mexico. The movie shows what the young boy must endure making the journey from Mexico across the border to be reunited with his mother.

Available on Hulu or for rent on YouTube, Google Play, iTunes, Vudu, & Amazon Prime.

**El Norte (The North)** R | 2h 21min | Drama

[Trailer](#)

This 1983 film follows siblings Enrique and Rosa. They are

forced to flee Guatemala when the violence from a decades-long civil war puts their lives at risk. Remembering their father's declaration that the United States is a place where the poor "can make something of themselves," the siblings begin a trek to the U.S. When the siblings leave Guatemala, they make their way to Mexico and seek out a coyote to help them cross the U.S.-Mexico border. They fail crossing the border several times, but once they make it to Los Angeles, they find out that not even El Norte will accept them. While Rosa and Enrique try to survive in the U.S. without the proper documentation, an illness tragically separates the siblings.

Available on HBO or for rent on YouTube, Google Play, iTunes, Vudu, & Amazon Prime.

**Sin Nombre** R | 1h 36min | Thriller, Crime

[Trailer](#)

"Sin Nombre" is a film inspired by the director's firsthand experience with Central American immigrants. It follows Sayra, a Honduran teenager migrating to the U.S. with her father and uncle, as well as Casper, a Mexican gang member. Casper, who robs migrants who ride trains headed for the U.S., meets Sayra when they both stow away on a train headed north. During their journey, Casper must decide whether to maintain his total allegiance to his gang or to take a different path. From there, the film follows Sayra and Casper as they continue their journey north trying to make it to the U.S. When the two reach the border, things take a turn.

Available for rent on YouTube, Google Play, iTunes, Vudu, & Amazon Prime.

**Entre Nós (Between Us)** NR | 1h 21min | Drama

[Trailer](#)

"Entre Nós" is the true story of a woman who makes the journey from Colombia with her children to Queens, New York to be reunited with her husband. When she arrives in the U.S., her husband abandons the family and leaves them to fend for themselves. The family is left digging through garbage and doing whatever it takes to get by. The movie gives audiences a heartbreaking look at the immigrant experience through the eyes of a single mother with two children.

Available on Vudu or for rent on iTunes & Amazon Prime.

By sharing these different viewpoints, I simply hope to broaden the views of others and show different experiences and struggles that many immigrants can face. This can perhaps help others begin to understand the struggles that immigrant survivors can endure. It can also possibly help others understand why some individuals who have been in these immigration situations may struggle with the decision to report abuse.

—Annabell





# Family Advocate

By Christa Dasher

## Consequences of COVID-19 Response on Child Abuse

With the increase of COVID-19 cases, states throughout the country have issued stay at home orders. These conditions mean that families are in close quarters with one another and are having limited contact outside of the people in their immediate household. These conditions can be dangerous for some people – including children. Many news stories have been reporting an increase in reports of domestic violence during this time. While there has been an increase in the number of reports of domestic violence, reports of child abuse have gone down dramatically. This decrease is especially concerning because children in a home with family violence are at an increased risk of child abuse. Statistics show that children in a house where there is domestic violence present, are sixty times more likely to be a victim of child abuse when compared to the general population.<sup>1</sup> According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), for the first time, the majority of the sexual abuse hotline's calls are from minors.<sup>2</sup> Increased stress in the home due to job loss, parents home-schooling children, and working from home, all increase stress and risk for child abuse.

One may wonder what has caused the drop in the reporting of child abuse. This decrease can be primarily attributed to the fact that educators and schools account for the greatest number of reports of child abuse. With schools closed, teachers and school personnel are no longer having face to face contact with students. With many schools closing for the rest of the school year, this leaves children without these critical contacts until the next school year. The second largest group of reporters are friends, family, and neighbors. With social distancing, a child loses most contact with those people, such as grandparents, who are outside the immediate home. Children are most often abused by someone they know, so they very well may be trapped at home with their offenders. Children are now not able to rely on traditional adults to help them with escaping an abusive situation.

During this time, we are forced to consider other ways to help keep children safe. We, as a community, need to work together to help identify and engage new partners in helping identify child abuse. People such as mail carriers, home repair workers, waste management professionals, and food delivery services are all people who may have regular contact with children during this time. Educating these professionals about child abuse signs and symptoms and how to report, is essen-

tial. We, as community members, can check in on our neighbors and ask questions like, "How is the family? How are the kids?" Animal abuse has been linked to family violence and child abuse. Including animal control officers and veterinarians in conversations about child abuse detection and reporting is also important. People should check in regularly with the children and families that are important in their lives through phone calls or video chats. As community members, we all have an obligation to protect children. If you see something, say something. Even if it is only a suspicion, you should report it.

Engaging local businesses can also be a unique way to reach out to those in a dangerous situation. A local tattoo parlor posted that if a person was in an abusive situation they could not get out of, that person should message them about the angel tattoo special. They then would message them, asking for an address to send a gift card. Once they received the address, they would contact the police to come and get them out of the unsafe situation.

To report child abuse, you should contact your local child protective services department or law enforcement agency. Other useful numbers for families and child abuse victims include the National Parent Helpline at 1-855-427-2736 or the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD. For Sexual Abuse resources and support, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE or 262-637-SAFE in Racine County.

—Christa

<sup>1</sup>Webinar **Unintended Consequences of the Coronavirus Response, Increasing Risk of Family Violence April, 15 2020.** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5147541113095386639>

<sup>2</sup>Vagianos, Alanna 2020, 'Child Sex Abuse Reports Spike As Country Shelters In Place, Advocates Say' HuffPost, accessed April 23 2020



Cont. from page 1

spread the message that what a victim is wearing is never an excuse for sexual assault. If you are following us on social media, you may have seen our Denim Day posts.

This year was a SAAM unlike any other we have experienced, but SAS staff and advocates across the country came together with creativity and ingenuity to honor the month. In the end, we feel that awareness was raised and survivors were supported, so we're pretty proud of our efforts!

—Sam



# Face to Face

By Kari Wilder

## Mental Health, Tele-counseling, and COVID-19

In December of 2019 a new strain of the coronavirus was discovered which is now named COVID-19. By January 30th the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a public health emergency but it was not until March 12th that it was declared a public health emergency in Wisconsin. On March 24th, Governor Evers officially issued a "Safer at Home" order which is to stay in place until April 24th. This order stated that all non-essential businesses and operations must cease. Individuals should only leave their homes if they qualify as an essential worker, are performing tasks essential to their health and safety, are obtaining necessary supplies and services, are taking care of others, or are engaging in outdoor activities. When engaging in any of these activities the order stated that we are to practice social distancing which requires individuals to stay at least 6 feet apart, avoid direct physical contact, and to keep any groups to less than 5 people.

These difficult times put agencies all around the world who provide counseling services in a complicated situation. While mental health services are definitely essential COVID-19 meant that it is no longer safe for individuals to meet face-to-face. A therapist could be asymptomatic for up to 14 days meaning they could accidentally infect many of their clients. Agencies, like Sexual Assault Services, were forced to figure out a way they could continue to provide services while keeping their employees and clients safe. Thankfully this is where technology could come in. The majority of households in the United States have access to a smartphone, tablet, or a computer with a camera which made tele-counseling a great option.

Tele-counseling helps breaks down barriers for clients who can not access services. This is not limited to a global pandemic. Clients can often live in remote areas and may be too far from a clinic to receive face-to-face services. Clients may also have physical limitations which make it difficult or impossible for them to reach a clinic. One of the major concerns around tele-counseling for many clients is confidentiality. Confidentiality is just as important in tele-counseling as it is in face-to-face counseling which is why services aren't offered over your typical video chat apps such as Skype or Facebook Messenger. Sexual Assault Services and agencies around the nation have turned to [Doxy.me](https://doxy.me) which provides a secure platform that is compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). Therapists are able to create a virtual room

where they can have a confidential session with their clients. The client does not need to download an app or make an account they simply click on a link unique to their therapist. This allows clients to meet with their therapists without providing tons of personal information.

There is no denying that 2020 has been a difficult year and that these last few months have been vastly different from anything most of us have experienced. Many individuals use socialization as a coping skill for various mental illnesses and having to remain isolated from friends and family can have a detrimental impact on their mental health. On the opposite end of the spectrum there are also many individuals who are forced to be quarantined with people who may negatively impact their mental health. Now more than ever it is important that clients have access to mental health services and tele-counseling ensures that clients can get the support that they need.

—Kari



## SAS Program Statistics July-December 2019

Crisis Line Calls.....	91
Racine Hospital Visits.....	51
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	8
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	50
New Counseling Clients.....	31
Counseling Sessions.....	435
Support Group Sessions.....	12
Community Presentations.....	40
CAC Appointments.....	47



# Meet Scarlette!

*Hello everyone! My name is Scarlett Kinderman and I am the new Volunteer & Community Awareness Specialist at Sexual Assault Services. I am thrilled to be joining the SAS team and to be working with everyone. I hope while working with SAS that I can help grow the current volunteer base while providing excellent support to you, our current volunteers.*

*My background includes: a term of service in AmeriCorps NCCC where I lead teams of volunteers on rebuild projects, trained volunteers in disaster preparedness, weatherized homes, worked in sustainable agriculture, worked at animal shelters, and created a step-by-step guide for mapping and newsletter distribution in New York City. Locally, I have volunteered with The Racine Literacy Council, Racine Theatre Guild, and The Rhode Center for the Arts.*

*I have my Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Direction and Management. I have also been awarded The Bronze Congressional Award and The Silver President's Volunteer Service Award for my work in the nonprofit sector.*

*I am looking forward to meeting and working with all of you.*

---

## **An Old Dinosaur Learning New Ways – Looking at The Effects of The Harvey Weinstein Case**

On October 5, 2017, The New York Times released an article<sup>1</sup>. This article spurred on a movement that would reach across the world. The subject of the article? Enter Harvey Weinstein, a powerful man at the top of the entertainment industry. A man who thought money could make all his problems disappear and, for a long time it did. Weinstein has a sordid history of sexual assault and misconduct that was well known but brushed under the rug.

A few examples of Weinstein silencing his victims include a Ms. O'Connor, who worked at his company. She released a memo in 2015 detailing Weinstein's behaviors for the past two years. But, before the accusations were investigated by his company, Weinstein and Ms. O'Connor reached a settlement: the matter was dropped. In 2015, Ambra Battilana, a model and aspiring actor, went to police regarding forced sexual contact launching an investigation that was later dropped. The district attorney's office refused to bring charges. Battilana and Weinstein later came to an agreement which included

a financial settlement and a confidentiality agreement. There are currently over 80 women who have come forward over the past few years and accused Weinstein. It brought to light his dark narrative that goes back decades.

After the article was printed in The New York Times the public eye was focused heavily on Weinstein. He could no longer cover up his actions with money, although he did try. So began his eventual downfall – from an untouchable, powerful man to a convicted rapist. Last month Weinstein was sentenced to 23 years in prison. Due to his age and poor health, he will likely spend the rest of his life behind bars. His lawyers plan on appealing. But with the guilty verdict having been reached in the New York case, Weinstein now faces another trial in LA<sup>2</sup>. His lawyers have a lot of work cut out for them.

How did The New York Times article and discussion about Weinstein's case spur on a movement? A week after the original article was published, celebrities started joining in on the #MeToo movement. This, in turn, caused it to become a viral hit on social media. Countless individuals from across the world came forward and started sharing their stories. This has brought the conversation of sexual assault to the forefront. In fact, over 200 prominent men, who also thought they could hide behind money and power, have lost their jobs after survivors bravely came forward<sup>3</sup>. A study done by Roee Levy and Martin Mattson from Yale University shows a 13% increase in reporting of sexual crimes as well as an increase in arrests, because of the #MeToo movement<sup>4</sup>.

The ripple effect of Weinstein's case can be felt everywhere. As we close this year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month it is good to look back and see the positive effect his sentencing - and the awareness it brought - can have for survivors everywhere. As the president of RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) Scott Berkowitz so nicely put, "This case - and the national reckoning about the pervasiveness of sexual violence it sparked - will have a lasting legacy. We hope that survivors will feel encouraged to come forward, knowing that it can truly make a difference in bringing perpetrators to justice."<sup>2</sup>

—Scarlette

<sup>1</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/us/harvey-weinstein-harassment-allegations.html>

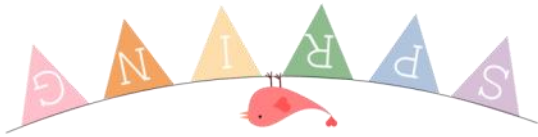
<sup>2</sup><https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51840532>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/23/us/metoo-replacements.html>

<sup>4</sup>[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3496903](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3496903)







Sexual Assault Services  
2000 Domanik Dr. 4th Floor  
Racine, WI 53404

### Contact Us!

SAS Racine Office  
2000 Domanik Dr. 4th Floor  
Racine, WI 53404  
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office  
480 S. Pine St.  
Burlington, WI 53105  
262-763-6226 Ext. 109

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Spanish Crisis Line: 262-424-3134

Website: <http://www.sasofracine.org>

### Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at [ssustachek@focusracine.org](mailto:ssustachek@focusracine.org) with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

---

*Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.*

*Sexual Assault Services is funded by United Way of Racine County, Victims of Crime Act grant, Sexual Assault Victim Services grant, the Racine Dominican Mission Fund, the Racine Community Foundation, and the support of generous local donors.*

